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Automotive News

OCTOBER 28, 1991

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late news

Nissan to allow duals in Japan

TOKYO — Nissan Motor Co. will specifically allow its 221 Japanese group dealers to sell foreign cars and non-Nissan parts in a new contract.

The contract meets critics head on. U.S. trade negotiators and automakers have said networks of exclusive dealerships have effectively kept U.S. products out of the marketplace. (See related story, Page 4.)

Nissan says it is signing the new contract "to clarify the freedom of domestic distributors." The company says they were never "forced" to handle only Nissan products, but the current contract has required "prior consultation" with Nissan. That clause is being dropped in the new contract going into effect this week.

Nissan is the first automaker to announce such a change.

— *Mary Ann Maskery*

Volvo job cuts now total 114

Volvo Cars of North America laid off 21 employees last week, bringing to more than 100 the number of jobs the

see LATE NEWS, 2

NADA waffles on program cars

Report reiterates stand on subsidies

CHARLES M. THOMAS
Staff Reporter

Despite a torrent of dealer complaints about program cars and their effect on new-car sales, National Automobile Dealers Association directors adopted a task force report last week that harps on manufacturers to halt fleet subsidies, but by and large straddles the fence on the nettlesome issue of program cars.

Among the recommendations by the NADA task force assigned to study the issue are that manufacturers repurchase all program cars from daily rental companies, and distribute them to franchised dealers exclusively through auto auctions.

The report fell far short of demands that manufacturers limit program car volumes, even though it does ask automakers to keep repurchase units in daily rental fleets for 12,000 miles and six months.

Ford Motor Co., General Motors and Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A. Inc. already offer to repurchase 100 percent of all program cars. But Chrysler Corp., for example, repurchases only 75 percent of program vehicles, leaving disposal of the remainder to the daily rental company.

"The big thing is the adoption of hold periods and increasing mileage limitations," said Frank Anderson Jr., NADA president. "We need a greater differentiation on program car vehicles to set them apart from new cars."

Though manufacturers like GM and Ford are raising the average mileage on program cars to 12,000 miles and six months before they

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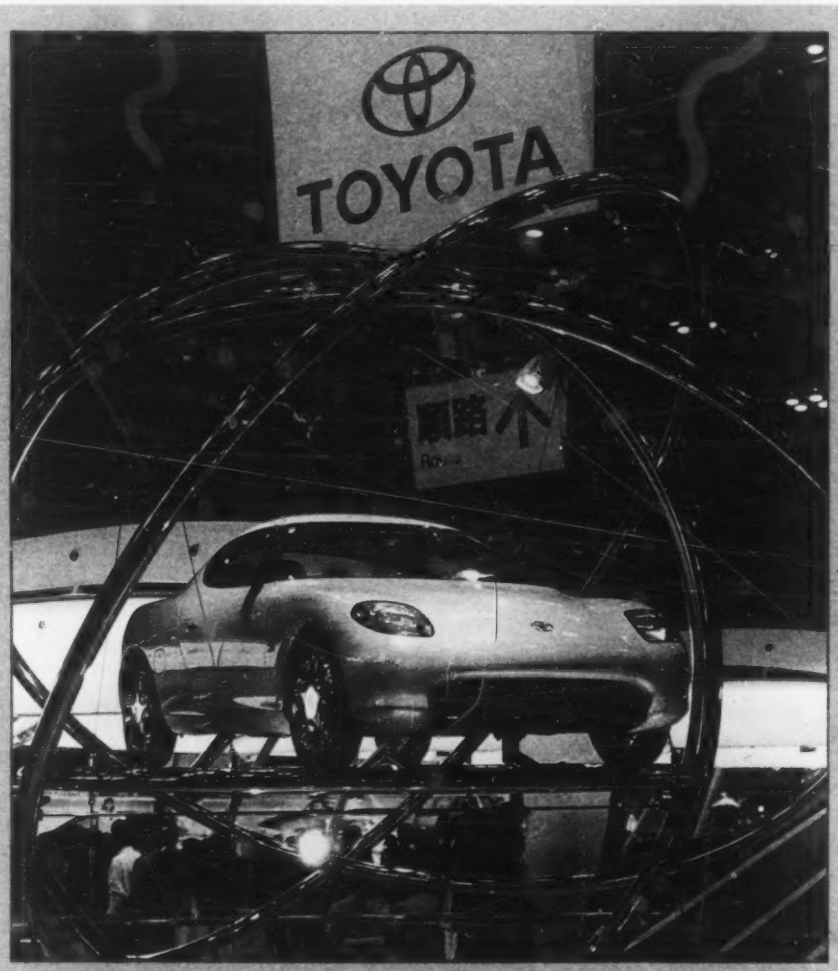

DAVID NELSON
Toyota's AXV-IV commuter car concept is powered by a compact two-stroke engine.

Tokyo covers all the niches

RICHARD JOHNSON
Staff Reporter

TOKYO — Japan's fertile-minded designers, engineers and product planners threw down the gauntlet at the 1991 Tokyo Motor Show, rolling out concept and production models that filled every conceivable niche and created a few new ones.

Makuhari Convention Center was packed with prototypes and production cars — so many new models that in the weeks before the show Japanese companies ran out of days in which to preview them. Toyota had to launch the new Aristo and Crown Majesta models on the same day.

Besides Aristo and Crown, new production models breaking cover here include

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U.S. makers set to build right drives

LINDSAY CHAPPELL
Staff Reporter

American car factories are suddenly lining up to put steering wheels on the wrong side.

Barely three years ago, the Big 3 and Japanese transplants alike — as much as they wanted to export cars to Japan and other right-hand-drive markets — were saying that it just wasn't economically feasible to move the steering wheel.

But now, renewed interest in exporting and a gaping trade deficit with Japan is prompting a change.

Only one U.S. operation, Honda of America Manufacturing Inc., is currently building right-side-steering cars for export, but the ranks

see RIGHT SIDE, 44

Iacocca plans exit as victor

MARY CONNELLY
Staff Reporter

HIGHLAND PARK, Mich. — Despite the anemic U.S. economy, Chrysler Corp. Chairman Lee Iacocca will spearhead a market-share assault in 1992 in a crucial bid to return the company to profitability before his retirement at the end of next year.

The strategy will focus on two key markets: the high-margin sport-utility segment and the brutally competitive mid-sized sedan class. Chrysler must make strong inroads into both to generate cash and maintain its standing as a full-range vehicle manufacturer.

Chrysler expects pent-up demand for vehicles in a recovering U.S. economy during a presidential election year to aid its market-share drive.

"I really think that 1992 is a turnaround year for the country first and then the auto industry," Iacocca said in an interview last week.

"Something has got to happen in 1992. I am an optimist because there is a cycle called 'being elected president or senator.' That cycle is going to hit next year. You might have the whole Republican Party's future at stake here."

Iacocca, who has been more optimistic about 1992 than many other observers, acknowledges that the industry currently is being crushed by flagging consumer confidence.

Iacocca: bullish for '92 prospects

"The final 1991 sales are going to look awful because the last quarter is not moving," Iacocca said. "Showroom traffic has taken a dive. How the hell can that be? It's the middle of fall, and all the new models are out.

"Most recessions really nail the blue-collar worker. He gets laid off until people want to build inventories or consumer demand returns," he said. "This one is different. You have 53-year-old vice presidents looking for a job. When do people start buying — that is the $64 question."

The aggressiveness of its market-share efforts give Chrysler good reason to hope that buyers will return to showrooms in 1992. As

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Outside successor wouldn't be a first ➤ 45

SATURN ONE YEAR LATER 3

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correction

The following changes should be made in the 1992 Market Classification chart in the Oct. 21 *Automotive News Insight*: Near-luxury class: Add Volvo 740 and 940. Luxury: Add Volvo 960 and Mercedes-Benz S-class sedans.

Ranger redo

JIM DUNNE/POPULAR MECHANICS

Ford is readying a redesigned Ranger compact pickup truck for introduction as a 1993 model, possibly next summer. The new truck has a more aerodynamic look with a sloping hoodline and doors that curve into the roof, eliminating the drip rails. The rear of the cab extends over the top of the front part of the cargo box. Mazda will get a rebadged version of the new truck for 1994.

latenews

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company has cut his year.

The 21 positions eliminated last week were the only ones terminated outright. Nearly half of the 114 jobs lost since the end of 1990 came through early retirement. The rest were cut by attrition or by eliminating jobs that were budgeted but not filled, said Volvo spokesman Robert Austin.

Following last week's layoffs, Volvo Cars had 719 U.S. employees, down from 833 at the end of last year.

— Jim Henry

Alamo plans 15% boost to GM dominated fleet

NEW YORK — Beleaguered General Motors' sales will get a slight boost from Alamo Rent A Car this model year. The daily rental company will have 127,000 vehicles in its fleet during peak tourist seasons, an increase of 15 percent, or 17,000 vehicles, from the previous year.

More than 90 percent of the vehicles Alamo buys are from GM. Alamo is the largest Buick customer in the United States, and the second largest customer of Chevrolet and Cadillac.

Bank calls in loans; dealerships go bankrupt

Blaming two banks for failing to renegotiate two balloon notes for $4.5 million even though payments were current, the JKJ automotive group filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 11 of the federal bankruptcy code last week for seven of its eight dealerships.

John W. Koons Jr., president of the company, said the dealerships will continue to operate until debts with creditors are renegotiated.

The dealerships which have filed for protection against creditors under the federal bankruptcy code are JKJ Chevrolet in Sterling, VA.; JKJ Buick-Isuzu-Mitsubishi in Woodbridge, Va.; JKJ Saturn in Sterling, Va.; JKJ Chrysler-Plymouth in Alexandria, Va.; Koons Chrysler-Plymouth in Vienna, Va.; and JKJ Lincoln-Mercury-Isuzu and JKJ Buick, both in Arlington, Va.

The only dealership in the group not filing for protection is JKJ Honda of Woodbridge, Va.

— Charles M. Thomas

U.S., battery consortium budget $260 million

WASHINGTON — The Department of Energy and the U.S. Advanced Battery Consortium will spend $260 million over the next four years to develop a new generation of batteries for electric vehicles under an agreement signed Friday at the White House.

The consortium was established in January by the Big 3 and electric utilities. Government participation adds $130 million of investment and the brains of national laboratories.

The goal of the project is to make electric vehicles competitive by the year 2000, President Bush said at the ceremony.

— Max Gates

European trade pact would dissolve barriers

BRUSSELS — Nineteen European nations joined forces last week in a move that will create the world's largest and most lucrative consumer market.

The 12-member European Community, which had its own plans to form a single market by 1993, teamed with the seven-nation European Free Trade Association to form a trade zone that will stretch from Greece to Iceland.

Under the accord, which still must be ratified, the nations will tear down the many trade barriers preventing the free movement of money, goods and services across borders.

— The Associated Press

Pontiac loans vehicles to Oakland fire victims

Pontiac and one of its dealers will provide temporary loaner vehicles to victims of the devastating fire in Oakland, Calif., that destroyed 2,900 residences.

Two-week loaners will be provided to anyone who presents a valid driver's license, verifiable residence information and proof of vehicle insurance, said Dean Weaver, owner of Connell Pontiac in Oakland.

— Phil Frame

APVs readied for export at Tarrytown plant

General Motors in 1992 plans a 25 percent increase in exports of its APV minivans, which now are being 100 percent homologated for overseas sale at the assembly plant in North Tarrytown, N.Y.

GM's International Export Sales will market 6,700 APVs in Europe, Mexico and Brazil during calendar year 1991, officials said at a news conference last week. The group expects exports to hit 8,400 units in 1992.

Homologation — preparation of the vehicles to meet foreign standards — began at the plant in September.

— Phil Frame

Ford, Mazda to decide on European deal soon

TOKYO — Ford Motor Co. President Philip Benton says he expects a decision on a possible Ford-Mazda joint venture in Europe "by the end of the year."

The two companies reached a basic understanding two years ago to develop a compact car and build it in Europe, probably at Ford's plant in Saarland, Germany. They have not been able to complete the deal, but Benton, speaking to the Japanese press, said, "Our objective is to do it."

— Mary Ann Maskery

briefly

Maybe Honda will relocate

A familiar rhetorical gibe thrown at **Honda Motor Co.** is this: "If you're so American, why don't you move your headquarters to the United States?" Now President Nobuhiko Kawamoto says that could happen. "Everything is open," he said at the Tokyo Motor Show. Honda is now trying to develop a truly global approach to the industry, where Japan becomes just one part of the system, not the controlling part. "If the central area of business becomes the United States, we could move to the U.S."

YOU SAY AUTOLATINA . . . in Brazil. And **Ford** and **Volkswagen** now say AutoEuropa in Portugal. The two companies have given a formal name, AutoEuropa Automoveis Lmta., to their 50-50 joint venture in Setubal, Portugal. The $2.8 billion project will begin producing a new minivan in late 1994. The two companies formed Autolatina when they combined operations in Brazil and Argentina in 1987.

YUTAKA IACOCCA — Nissan President Yutaka Kume says he is ready to become Japan's Lee Iacocca and speak up to defend Japanese interests when trade talk includes proposals to limit transplant production or market share. "I am fully aware that these issues become emotional and politicized. But over-restrictions are unfair. And I will be just like Iacocca when it comes to speaking out loudly against them."

Kume wants to be Japan's Iacocca

THE 100 MPG QUESTION — You can't shove toothpaste back into the tube. On Oct. 17, a week before the Tokyo Motor Show, the *New York Times* reported that **Honda Motor Co.** was expected to unveil "an unusual two-seat passenger car whose fuel efficiency it says could top 100 miles per gallon." The EP-X car was at the show, but Honda President Nobuhiko Kawamoto denied the 100 mpg figure. "We said nothing about that," he said. So did the *Times* make it up, or is Honda back-pedaling? We won't take odds. But we bet we hear about the 100 mpg Honda for years.

MPG WARS — And here's the first repercussion. **General Motors** cars get the best gas mileage in seven of 18 EPA categories for vehicles with automatic transmissions, so company officials were indignant over the glowing published reports of the 100 mpg **Honda** concept car. GM decided enough was enough, and it rushed to reporters a photo of the 200-mpg, motorcycle-like Lean Machine concept vehicle which GM showed in the early 1980s. GM noted that the one-passenger Lean Machine has been on display at its World of Motion exhibit in the EPCOT Center for nearly a decade.

GM's Lean Machine

Buick finally hits sales skids after product shortfall

JIM HENRY
Staff Reporter

NEW YORK — The sales slump finally touched Buick, which has been faring far better than average this year. But even in its travail, the division remains the envy of other brands.

Part of Buick's shortfall was lack of cars to sell in the early days of the 1992 model year.

For the industry, sales of cars and light trucks were off 15.3 percent for Oct. 11-20, based on the daily selling rate. Unit sales totaled 275,171, down 24.7 percent, but there were eight selling days this year and nine in 1990.

Sales fell for each of the Big 3. By daily selling rate, Chrysler Corp. was off 12.5 percent, Ford Motor Co. dipped 20.8 percent, and General Motors slid 16.2 percent.

October has been unkind to Buick. As of Sept. 30, Buick sales were 7,610 units ahead of last year, making Buick one of the few brands — and by far the largest — with higher sales this year than last. But in the first 20 days of October, sales were off 5,240 units, shrinking the division's year-to-date improvement to a slim 2,370 cars.

Spokesman Lawrence R. Gustin said Buick started the 1992 model year Oct. 1 with the lowest inventory of carryover models in 17 years, and by last week some dealers still hadn't received stocks of all the new models.

Contributing to good sales earlier in the year were customer incentives tied to option packages on 1991 models. Those rebates expired Sept. 25.

American Honda Motor Co. Inc. also suffered from lack of product.

The company's daily sales rate plunged 30.4 percent in mid-October.

Acura Division did well despite low inventories; its sales rate rose 15.6 percent. For the year-to-date, Acura is 1,006 units ahead of 1990.

John Tufo of Larchmont, N.Y., one of Acura's top 10 dealers, said

> "In 17 years, I've never had so many people shopping for leftovers. And I'm making money on the leftovers."
>
> **JOHN TUFO**
> ACURA DEALER

he could be selling more cars, but he doesn't have any 1992 models and his inventory of 1991s is light. "The lot's like half-empty," Tufo said.

He said Acura's dealer incentives — $2,500 on 1991 Legend sedans and $3,500 on Legend coupes — have helped sell the leftover models while maintaining his gross profits.

"In 17 years, I've never had so many people shopping for leftovers. And I'm making money on the leftovers," Tufo said. "If I had more cars, it would have been an above-average month."

He expects October to be about average for the dealership, with sales of 120 to 125 cars.

American Honda spokesman Mike Spencer said 1992 Hondas haven't arrived at dealerships yet, except for a limited supply of Civic and Accord four-door sedans.

Honda did not start building 1992 Civics at its East Liberty, Ohio, plant until Oct. 1, when the last 1991 was produced.

East Liberty was the last U.S. assembly plant to switch over to 1992 models.

Sales results were mixed for other Japan-based companies:

- The daily sales rate rose 2.2 percent for Nissan Motor Corp. in U.S.A.
- Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A. Inc. saw its daily sales rate fall 16.6 percent for the period.
- At Mitsubishi Motor Sales of America Inc., the sales rate rose 33.1 percent.

10-DAY CAR AND TRUCK SALES, BY MAKE

	Oct. 11-20, 1991	Oct. 11-20, 1990
ALFA ROMEO (imp. car)*	66	116
Acura (imp. car)	3,542	3,448
Domestic car	8,998	12,037
Imported car	2,834	9,377
Honda	12,540	15,485
AMERICAN HONDA	15,374	24,862
ASTON MARTIN (imp. car)*	2	2
BMW (imp. car)*	1,393	1,544
Domestic car*	3,602	4,746
Imported car*	64	64
Domestic truck*	80	62
Chrysler Division*	3,747	4,872
Domestic car*	6,960	10,316
Imported car*	1,017	730
Domestic truck*	9,072	9,653
Imported truck*	96	245
Dodge*	17,145	20,944
Domestic car*	1,614	1,142
Imported car*	275	302
Eagle*	1,889	1,444
Domestic truck*	3,504	5,160
Jeep*	3,504	5,160
Domestic car*	4,124	7,377
Imported car*	610	609
Domestic truck*	3,344	3,756
Plymouth*	8,078	11,742
Domestic car*	16,300	23,581
Imported car*	1,966	1,705
Domestic truck*	16,000	18,631
Imported truck*	96	245
CHRYSLER CORP.*	34,362	44,162
Imported car*	149	274
Imported truck*	47	101
DAIHATSU*	196	376
FERRARI (imp. car)*	24	24
Domestic car	22,066	34,756
Imported car	1,502	1,205
Domestic truck	24,459	34,707
Ford Division	48,027	70,668
Domestic car	4,052	5,579
Lincoln	4,052	5,579
Domestic car	7,853	9,633
Imported car	1,801	1,835
Mercury	9,654	11,468
Domestic car	33,971	49,968
Imported car	3,303	3,040
Domestic truck	24,459	34,707
FORD MOTOR CO.	61,733	87,715
Domestic car	10,967	14,748
Buick	10,967	14,748
Domestic car	6,309	5,730
Cadillac	6,309	5,730
Domestic car	22,285	30,775
Imported car	1,253	2,616
Domestic truck	21,177	30,604
Imported truck	0	0
Chevrolet	44,715	63,995
GMC	8,148	8,578
Domestic car	10,413	15,179
Domestic truck	524	681
Oldsmobile	10,937	15,860
Domestic car	10,012	14,139
Imported car	914	850
Domestic truck	645	781
Pontiac	11,571	15,770
Domestic car	2,248	0
Saturn	2,248	0
Domestic car	62,234	80,571
Imported car	2,167	3,466
Domestic truck	28,486	40,644
Imported truck	0	0
GENERAL MOTORS	92,887	124,681
HYUNDAI*†	3,604	3,092
Imported car*	299	196
Domestic truck	984	1,057
Imported truck*	2,499	2,535
ISUZU*	3,782	3,788
JAGUAR (imp. car)*	219	517
LAMBORGHINI (imp. car)*	4	4
LOTUS (imp. car)*	8	8
MASERATI (imp. car)*	6	6
Domestic car	1,164	1,693
Imported car*	3,051	3,269
Domestic truck	293	361
Imported truck*	3,065	2,906
MAZDA*	7,573	8,229
MERCEDES-BENZ (imp. car)*	1,667	2,021
Domestic car	1,125	1,218
Imported car*	2,163	1,712
Imported truck*	806	527
MITSUBISHI*	4,094	3,457
Infiniti	827	614
Domestic car	1,925	3,249
Imported car*	8,592	8,364
Domestic truck	2,835	3,259
Imported truck*	5,044	5,674
Nissan*	18,395	20,546
NISSAN MOTOR CORP.	19,222	21,160
PEUGEOT (imp. car)*	133	80
PORSCHE (imp. car)*	103	188
RANGE ROVER (imp. truck)*	85	121
ROLLS/BENTLEY (imp. car)*	7	15
SAAB (imp. car)*	668	420
STERLING (imp. car)*	85	85
Domestic car	1,270	404
Imported car*	1,334	2,565
SUBARU*	2,604	2,969
Imported car	158	251
Imported truck	350	252
SUZUKI†	508	503
Lexus (imp. car)	1,952	1,850
Domestic car	6,429	9,213
Imported car	7,490	9,076
Imported truck	5,112	8,170
Toyota	19,031	26,459
TOYOTA MOTOR SALES	20,983	28,309
Audi (imp. car)*	358	752
Imported car*	2,237	3,409
Imported truck*	108	137
Volkswagen*	2,346	3,546
VWoA*	2,704	4,298
VOLVO*†	1,837	2,436
YUGO (imp. car)*	100	110
Domestic car	133,416	181,934
Imported car	51,487	64,012
TOTAL CAR	184,903	245,946
Domestic truck	73,057	98,659
Imported truck	17,211	20,668
TOTAL TRUCK	90,268	119,327
TOTAL CAR & TRUCK	275,171	365,273

*Estimated †Breakdown of North American built and imported car sales not available.
There were 8 selling days in the period this year and 9 last year.

Van dumping ruling delayed until Dec. 27

MAX GATES
Staff Reporter

WASHINGTON — The Commerce Department has pushed back by 50 days its preliminary ruling on the Big 3's minivan dumping charges against Japanese makers.

The department's International Trade Administration will rule by Dec. 27 on charges that Toyota Motor Corp. and Mazda Motor Corp. have been dumping minivans in the U.S. market at prices lower than similar models sold in Japan.

The Big 3 filed their petition last May. The U.S. International Trade Commission ruled in July that a full investigation should be conducted. The commission said there was reasonable indication that the Big 3 had been hurt by imports allegedly sold at less than fair market value.

Commerce's decision had been expected by Nov. 7. After it releases its preliminary ruling, makers will have 75 days to appeal. And if Commerce finally concludes that the Japanese are guilty of dumping, the ITC will determine damage to the domestic industry and impose additional duties.

Attorneys for Toyota opposed the delay in the Commerce Department's preliminary ruling, saying the company has worked hard to meet original deadlines and may not have key personnel available later in the year.

Earlier, after twice reconsidering the decision, Commerce officials determined that the investigation will cover U.S. sales of Toyota's Previa minivans during the six months prior to the filing of the dumping charges. The investigation of Mazda's MPV minivan sales has been extended to eight months to consider the effects of price changes in the fall of 1990.

Since their initial petition, the Big 3 have altered their minivan definition to attempt to include the Mitsubishi Expo, which appears to be a minivan-wagon hybrid.

The Japanese makers also are fighting a request by the Big 3 that the Big 3's in-house lawyers have access to confidential court documents. The Japanese say that could lead to exposure of proprietary information, particularly about the relationships between the Japanese makers and their suppliers.

Chinese VW venture to spend millions to triple build

STEPHEN VINES
Staff Correspondent

HONG KONG — The Shanghai Volkswagen joint-venture car company has reached formal agreement on a $464 million investment program aimed at tripling output of the Santana sedan to 150,000 units per year by 1995.

The joint venture company is China's largest carmaker. Output for this year should reach 50,000 units.

Germany's Volkswagen AG owns half of the company, in partnership with four Chinese investors led by the Shanghai Tractor and Automobile Corp.

The new investment compares with start-up capital of $86 million in 1985.

The enlarged company will take over the Shanghai Automobile Industry Corp. plant next door that now makes the Shanghai Sedan, which is three decades old.

A new model will eventually be produced there, but the company will not reveal details, except that it will be larger than the 1.8-liter Santana.

An engine plant, with annual capacity to produce 100,000 units, has started production and is shipping engines to Germany.

The engine plant's annual capacity will be increased to 150,000.

Shanghai Volkswagen also claims to have achieved 60 percent local content in its cars, which would be the highest level of localization among China's joint-venture companies.

That will will increase to 70 percent by the end of the year, Shanghai Volkswagen said. The company has set a target for next year of 85 percent.

In recognition of its success in this sphere, Shanghai Volkswagen has become the first joint venture company in China to be given permission to import parts without a license.

Second VW venture poised to start assembling Jetta

STEPHEN VINES
Staff Correspondent

HONG KONG — A Chinese car company based in the northeastern city of Changchun is on schedule to produce its first cars this month. The company is a joint venture between First Auto Works and Volkswagen.

The company's plant will assemble 1,000 units from complete knockdown kits as a trial run, intending to reach full capacity by 1996 with an annual output of 150,000 vehicles.

The First Auto Works-Volkswagen venture plans extensive cooperation with the well-established Shanghai Volkswagen operation despite the considerable distance between the two plants. In addition, the two companies will develop joint servicing outlets.

Though there are very few hatchbacks on China's roads, the Golf could join the Jetta at the Changchun assembly plant.

First Auto Works-Volkswagen also plans to make 270,000 engines and 180,000 transmissions per year.

Volkswagen holds 40 percent of the joint venture; the remainder is held by Chinese interests led by First Auto Works.

The current plan is to produce Volkswagen's Jetta model, although Klaus Wulf, the venture company's first vice president, does not rule out the possibility of also making VW Golf cars. The two cars share many components.

The Jetta has been chosen, says Wulf, because after some discrete market testing in China, "we got the very clear feeling that the Chinese really understand the Jetta but have difficulty understanding the Golf."

There are very few hatchback cars on China's roads.

The engine and transmission plants are scheduled to come on stream by 1995 or 1996. The plan is to export a significant part of the output to Volkswagen factories abroad.

trucks

Safety rules slow startup on '92 conversions

JOSEPH BOHN
Truck Editor

Van converters are still focusing their efforts and attention on making their 1992 models comply with new federal safety regulations.

"Most of us cannot yet build the entire product line with all the options and meet the compliance requirements," said the president of a major conversion firm in the Elkhart, Ind., area.

As a result of new designs, converters are grappling with things like relocating all the "H-points," or places where they mount the top of their three-point brackets in relation to the seats.

Econolines present a particular problem since Ford was late in getting prototypes to converters and suppliers. That has led to a delay for suppliers in getting molds made for plastic and fiberglass components such as tops and running boards.

While the industry double- and triple-checks its early production models and chafes at the frustration of not being able to fill orders as quickly as it would like, its concern with the safety issue is notable.

Earlier this year, several randomly selected vans failed to meet the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's tests for seat-belt anchorages.

The experience obviously heightened awareness and concern about safety compliance.

"I'm proud of everybody's efforts in compliance. There's a lot of thinking about (federal safety standards) 207, 208 and 210. It's a win for consumers," said the van-conversion company official.

Companies are unwilling to let chassis go until they are in complete compliance. And if NHTSA conducts more tests this year, the betting is that all the test vehicles will pass.

Construction standards have been upgraded significantly, even among the smaller converters, because of their greater concern over potential liability.

And Detroit chassis suppliers have been pounding away on quality and compliance issues in meetings with converters and inspections of their operations.

The issues were in the forefront of Ford Motor Co.'s and Chrysler Corp.'s annual sales meetings with converters in Cleveland last week, according to Jerome Mittman, Ford RV sales manager, and James Lynch, Chrysler special vehicles sales manager.

Conversion company presidents and owners in the Elkhart community now are talking about engineering and production issues at social functions in the same way they normally discuss sales and other trends.

The safety concerns also have benefited some suppliers of complete installation systems like The Compliance Group of Milwaukee.

Allen Swenson, company spokesman, said the firm is now servicing about 30 percent of the van conversion market. It has 45 major converters and is adding about two new ones a week.

Sales are running at a rate of more than $10 million yearly.

The Compliance Group's packages include seat pedestals, slides and belt harnesses for middle-row chairs and rear sofas, underfloor installation bracketry and all required reinforcements and hardware.

It has complete kits for full-sized Chevrolet, Ford, Dodge and GMC vans and compact GM vans.

The systems start at about $300 to $330 per vehicle and save converters from having to pay for tests on their own designs.

The company also has provided testing assistance to a number of major van conversion seating manufacturers, like Flexsteel Industries and Weiland Design.

More than a limo

Van conversion sales have rebounded more strongly than the overall car market because of their upscale appeal. Buyers typically live in suburban areas and travel a lot, according to a study done for the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association in Reston, Va.

Imperial buys Ger-Win rights

JOSEPH BOHN
Truck Editor

Imperial Industries Inc. of Elkhart, Ind., has acquired exclusive marketing rights to the Ger-Win GMC product line, according to James Brown, Imperial president.

Ger-Win is part of American International Ger-Win Corp. in Bristol, Ind.

Purchase of Ger-Win's marketing rights transferred that company's GMC bailment pool account to Imperial. It also enables Imperial to market GMC van and other truck conversions under the Ger-Win name.

Imperial will call its GMC vans "Imperial Ger-Win," initially, but gradually will de-emphasize the Ger-Win name in favor of Imperial, Brown said.

Imperial's sales were $3.2 million in 1990, and it projects $6 million-plus in 1991, Brown said. He anticipates topping $11 million in 1992.

Imperial is Chevrolet's second-oldest bailment account and finished in 12th place among Chevrolet's bailment accounts for the 1991 model year.

The company's growth has been somewhat flat in recent years. Its principal owner is Ken Parker, who is chief executive officer.

Brown bought into the firm in February as a minority owner. He expects a buyout agreement with Parker to give him principal ownership by mid-1992.

Brown owned Chariot Vans Inc. in Elkhart before selling 51 percent of it to Georgie Boy Manufacturing Inc. in Edwardsburg, Mich. He stayed with the firm as a part owner for a number of years before leaving in February 1990.

He plans to leave Imperial's structure as it is.

Imperial is currently running at an annualized rate of 1,400 Chevrolet, 400 GMC and 200 to 300 Dodge and Ford conversions.

The deal was good financially for Ger-Win as well.

Jerry Kash, president of American International Ger-Win, said he did not have enough salespersons to develop the full potential of the GMC pool account.

Ger-Win still has its Ford, Chevrolet and Dodge pool accounts, Kash said, and plans to build up Dodge sales in particular. He expects to sell about 2,000 conversions in the 1992 model year, with Dodge accounting for half of them.

Under his agreement with Brown, Kash will still do a few GMC drop-ship conversions.

Minivan chassis still need work

Ford, Chrysler face price, safety issues

JOSEPH BOHN
Truck Editor

Ford Motor Co. and Chrysler Corp. face some additional work before they can launch their minivan conversion chassis, according to van converters.

Ford plans to begin building Aerostar RV prep packages on Nov. 4, said Jerome Mittman, Ford Division RV sales manager.

The company repriced its 1992 Aerostar RV van chassis and prep package to make it more than

Jerome Mittman, Ford Division RV sales manager, targets the start of production of Ford Aerostar RV prep packages for Nov. 4.

$1,000 cheaper than an Aerostar XLT factory wagon.

Still, that may not be enough.

Van conversions typically compete against factory passenger wagon versions of the same vehicle on price as well as appearance and equipment.

Glaval Inc. of Elkhart, Ind., Ford's largest van conversion pool account, thinks there has to be at least a $1,500 price spread between the RV package unit and the factory wagon to make the conversion vehicle successful.

Kevin Slater, Glaval vice president of sales, said that opinion came from dealers his company surveyed.

"The chassis has to be priced so that when you put on a conversion selling for $3,000 at dealer cost, the dealer can buy it for less than a mid- to high-line factory wagon," Slater said.

Glaval hasn't examined Aerostar's pricing structure in great detail yet because it is still totally focused on getting production of its full-sized van conversions up to full speed, Slater said.

It also has to clarify some details of the Aerostar equipment package he added.

Still, the company does plan to "seriously" look into converting both Aerostars and Dodge Caravan C/Vs by January, said sales officials.

Chrysler, and to some degree Ford, face the additional problem of getting suppliers to invest money to produce safety-certified systems for the minivans, according to Robert Wolfe, owner of Advanced Creations in Romulus, Mich.

"The big problem they (chassis manufacturers) have is getting suppliers hyped up enough to spend the money it takes to develop and test the seating and restraint systems (for minivan conversions) because of their previously low sales volumes," Wolfe said.

Chrysler didn't offer a Caravan C/V conversion package last year, but had one a couple years ago.

Wolfe said that even if it doubled its previous yearly volume, there wouldn't be a big enough market to "seriously get anyone into it."

The new safety regulations require suppliers to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars designing, testing and tooling seating and restraint systems. Without the lure of a big enough market, they're unlikely to invest the money to do so, Wolfe said.

And without supplier-certified systems, converters won't get into the market.

"I'm not ordering them, and I don't know anyone who is because we can't get the components," said Wolfe, whose company primarily converts Dodges.

There's a possibility of Chrysler working with one of the major seat suppliers to develop a certified system for converters. But, because of the volume limitations, it would likely be just one.

With the new safety regulations imposing more limitations, such as overhead consoles that cannot protrude more than two inches down, interior space limitations of minivans also pose problems for converters.

Still, Chevrolet Astro and GMC Safari minivans have been consistently strong sellers in the conversion market.

It seems the success of Ford and Dodge's minivan conversion programs will depend on how much effort they want to put into making them succeed.

RVIA re-elects officers at special meeting

RESTON, Va. — The Recreation Vehicle Industry Association re-elected as its chairman Mel Adams, president and chief executive officer of Recreation Vehicle Products Inc. in Wichita, Kan.

Elections were held in Las Vegas at a special board of directors meeting.

The group also re-elected H. Wayne Dahl, president and chief operating officer of Holiday Rambler Corp. in Wakarusa, Ind. Dahl will again serve as first vice chairman. John Zimmerman, chairman of Sunline Coach Co. in Denver, Pa., was re-elected second vice chairman.

Officers began serving one-year terms Oct. 1.

RECREATIONAL VEHICLE WHOLESALE DELIVERIES

	August 1991	August 1990	% change	8 mos. 1991	8 mos. 1990	% change
Travel trailers	4,400	4,000	+ 10.0	36,100	40,700	– 11.3
Park Trailers	500	600	– 16.7	4,400	4,800	– 8.3
Travel trailers—fifth wheel	2,500	2,000	+ 25.0	18,900	20,700	– 8.7
Folding camping trailers	2,500	2,800	– 10.7	22,600	22,400	+ 0.9
Truck campers	900	900	—	7,100	7,300	– 2.7
Towable RV total	**10,800**	**10,300**	**+ 4.9**	**89,100**	**95,900**	**– 7.1**
Conventional (type A)	2,300	2,200	+ 4.5	16,000	22,300	– 28.3
Van Campers (type B)	300	500	– 40.0	2,700	4,300	– 37.2
Chopped vans (all)	1,600	1,300	+ 23.1	11,000	13,600	– 19.1
Motor home total	**4,200**	**4,000**	**– 5.0**	**29,700**	**40,200**	**– 26.1**
Van conversions	14,200	16,200	– 12.3	88,200	134,500	– 34.4
TOTAL ALL RVs	**29,200**	**30,500**	**– 4.3**	**207,600**	**270,600**	**– 23.5**

Source: Recreation Vehicle Industry Association

GMAC offers 2.9% loans on 3 new '92 cars

ARLENA SAWYERS
Staff Reporter

To stimulate sales, General Motors, through General Motors Acceptance Corp., is offering cut-rate financing on three car lines that were redesigned for 1992.

Buyers of 1992 **Pontiac** Bonneville, **Buick** LeSabre and **Oldsmobile** Eighty Eight Royale can finance their cars at 2.9 percent for up to 48 months through Feb. 4.

Chrysler Corp. and Saab Cars USA Inc. enhanced their consumer incentive programs, and Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Inc. returned to the incentive fray last week.

Also, Cadillac, Nissan Motor Corp. in U.S.A. and American Honda Motor Co. Inc. are offering incentives on 1991 and/or 1992 vehicles.

Through Dec. 31, **Chrysler** is paying a $500 consumer rebate on 1992 Dodge/Plymouth Colt and Eagle Summit models. Previously, the rebate on those vehicles was $300. In lieu of cash, consumers may choose financing of 4.9 percent to 9.9 percent based on contract length.

Last week, **Saab** expanded its "Flexible Finance Program" to include its 1992 Saab 900S convertible and 900 turbo convertibles. The program previously included only 1992 Saab 9000 models.

The finance program allows consumers to choose interest rates of zero to 10 percent and monthly payments based on the down payment.

For example, a 1992 Saab 900S convertible with a suggested retail price of $31,035 (including destination charge) can be purchased with 0 percent interest and monthly payments of $333 for 48 months with a 40 percent down payment.

A financial contribution by the dealer is required.

Terms are available for 24, 36 and 48 months, and down payment requirements range from 20 percent to 40 percent. Saab's program expires Oct. 31.

Starting tomorrow and continuing through Dec. 31, **Rolls-Royce/Bentley** will pay the luxury tax for its buyers. Consumers may deduct the amount at purchase or receive a check from the importer.

The company offered the same program last summer from June 10 through Aug. 12.

Cadillac buyers are eligible for a $2,000 rebate on any 1991 Cadillac except Allante. The program ends Dec. 31.

Nissan dealers who reach 100 percent of their sales quotas earn $200 on all 1991 and 1992 cars and trucks retroactive to the first unit sold.

Additionally, Nissan is paying dealers $200 to $1,800 on 1991 cars and $1,000 on the 1992 Stanza. Truck rebates are $1,200 on 1991 models and $900 on 1992s. The dealer incentive on Pathfinders is $1,400 on 1991s and $600 on 1992s.

The previously announced incentive of $2,500 to $3,500 on the 1991 300ZX expires Feb. 2. Incentives on other Nissan vehicles end Nov. 4.

Honda dealers are entitled to a $400 factory incentive on 1991 Civic four-doors and a $500 ad allowance on 1991 Accord four-doors through Nov. 4.

incentive WATCH

INCENTIVE WATCH — CUSTOMER INCENTIVES

CONTINUING PROGRAMS

CHRYSLER CORP.

All programs expire Dec. 31. Finance rates in lieu of rebates start at 6.9 percent on minivans, 4.9 percent on other models.

In addition to the rebates on retail purchases listed here, Chrysler Corp. offers rebates under its Gold Key Plus and Gold Key Lease programs. The rebates are $250 to $2,000 on 1992 models and $150 to $1,975 on 1992 models.

1992 models

Chrysler Imperial, New Yorker Fifth Avenue	$1,000
LeBaron coupe, New Yorker Salon	$750
LeBaron sedan	$500
Dodge Monaco	$1,500
Dynasty	$1,000
Shadow conv.	$750
Shadow highline, Daytona, Spirit, Colt	$500
Shadow America	$300
Dodge Ram pickup (gas engine), Ram van conversion, Ramcharger	$1,000
Ram van and wagon, Dakota	$750
Ram 50	$300
Eagle Premier	$1,500
Talon, Summit	$500
Jeep Cherokee	$1,000
Comanche	$750
Wrangler	$500
Plymouth Sundance highline	$500
Acclaim, Laser, Colt hatchback	$500
Sundance America	$300

1990-91 models

Chrysler Imperial	$2,000
New Yorker Fifth Avenue and Salon, LeBaron sedan	$1,500
LeBaron coupe and conv.	$1,000
Dodge Shadow conv.	$2,000
Spirit, Monaco, Dynasty	$1,500
Daytona	$1,250
Colt GL, Shadow highline	$1,000
Shadow America, Colt	$700
Dodge Ran van conversion, Ram pickup (gas engine), Ramcharger	$1,500
Ram wagon, Ram van	$1,250
Dakota	$1,000
Ram 50	$750
Eagle Talon TSi, Premier	$1,500
Other Talon	$1,200
Summit 4-dr., Summit ES 3-dr.	$1,000
Summit base 3-dr.	$750
Jeep Cherokee, Grand Wagoneer	$1,500
Comanche	$1,000
Wrangler	$500
Plymouth Acclaim, Laser RS Turbo	$1,500
Other Laser	$1,200
Sundance highline	$1,000
Sundance America	$700
All awd minivans	$1,000
All 2wd minivans	$500

FORD MOTOR CO.

1992 models

Expires Dec. 3 In lieu of rebates, 4.8 percent loans on Probe, 7.9 on other Ford and Mercury; no finance incentive on Lincoln.

Ford Festiva, Mustang, Taurus	$500
Tempo*	$500
Thunderbird, Crown Victoria	$750
Escort GT and LX-E**	$750
Probe, Taurus SHO	$750
Aerostar*	$500
F series	$500
Ranger	$750
Bronco	$1,000
Mercury Sable	$500
Topaz*	$500
Tracer LTS*	$750
Capri, Cougar, Grand Marquis	$750
All Lincoln	$1,000

*Tempo, Topaz and Aerostar — $1,000 or 7.9 percent loan in Northeast

**Escort Pony and LX and Tracer sedan and wagon — $500 or 7.9 percent loan in Central and Great Lakes regions.

1990-91 models

1990-91 Ford models and 1991 L-M models, expires Dec. 3. In lieu of rebate, 4.8 percent loans on Festiva and Probe, 7.9 percent on other Ford and Mercury. No finance incentive on Lincoln.

Ford Escort (except GT), Mustang, Taurus, Tempo, Thunderbird	$400
Escort GT, Taurus SHO	$600
Festiva, Probe	$1,000
Aerostar*	$400
Ranger, F series, Econoline E-150 (except RV)	$400
Bronco, Econoline E-150 (RV)	$1,000
Mercury Tracer (except LTS), Topaz, Sable, Cougar	$400
Tracer LTS	$600
Capri	$1,000
All Lincoln	$2,000

*Aerostar — $1,000 or 7.9 percent loan in Northeast.

GENERAL MOTORS

Expires Feb. 4. Finance rates in lieu of rebates start at 4.9 percent for Buick, Oldsmobile and Pontiac; 6.9 percent for Chevrolet and GMC.

1992 models

Buick Skylark*	$250-750*
Century, Regal*	$250-1,000*
Riveria	$2,000
Chevrolet Caprice	$1,000
Geo Metro and Storm	$750
Geo Prizm, Camaro, Beretta, Lumina	$500
Cavalier	$300
G van, S/T Blazer, Lumina APV	$1,000
Geo Tracker, Astro, S/T pickup	$750
C/K pickup	$500
GMC G-van, S15 Jimmy (except Typhoon)	$1,000
Sonoma (except Cyclone, GT), Safari	$750
Sierra (except Crew Cab)	$500
Oldsmobile Cutlass Ciera (national)	$1,000
Regional programs, various models	$500-2,000
Pontiac Trans Sport	$1,000
Grand Prix	$750
LeMans, Firebird	$500

*Based on option package selected.

1991 models

Cadillac All models except Allante (expires Dec. 31)	$2,000
Chevrolet Caprice	$1,000
Geo Metro, Camaro	$750
Geo Storm and Prizm, Beretta, Lumina	$500
Cavalier, Corsica	$300
V Blazer, Suburban, G-van, S/T Blazer, Lumina APV	$1,000
Geo Tracker, Astro, S/T pickup, R/V and C/K pickups	$500
GMC V Jimmy, Suburban	$1,500
S15 Jimmy, G-van, Safari	$1,000
Sonoma (except Cyclone)	$750
Sierra, R/V pickups	$500
Oldsmobile - regional programs, various models	$500-2,000
Pontiac Trans Sport, LeMans, Firebird	$1,000
Grand Prix	$750

HYUNDAI

49 states (expires Jan. 3) Sonata with SE pkg. (1991), Excel with SE pkg. (1991)	$500
Scoupe (1991), Excel base (1991)	$750
Other Excel (1991), Other Sonata (1991)	$1,000
California only (1991 models, expires April 2) Excel, Scoupe	$750-1,000
Sonata	$1,000-1,500
All states (1991 models, expires Jan. 3) All 1991 models if trade is a 1986-90 Hyundai	$1,000

MAZDA (car rebates expire Nov. 4; truck rebates expire Dec. 3)

RX-7 (1991)	$2,000
626 (1991-92)*	$1,000
Navajo (1991)	$1,000
Trucks (1992)	$1,000
MX-6 (1991-92)	$800
Protege (1990-91)*	$800

*Or 5.9 percent financing

MITSUBISHI (1990-91 models; expires Oct. 31)

Mirage (S.E. and S.W. regions) $750

ROLLS-ROYCE/BENTLEY (1991 models; expires Dec. 31)

All models Company pays U.S. luxury tax

SUBARU (expires Nov. 4)

Loyale 4wd (1991)	$500
Legacy (1991)	$1,200
XT, XT6 (1991)	$2,000

INCENTIVE WATCH — DEALER INCENTIVES

CONTINUING PROGRAMS

ACURA (1991 models, expires Jan. 3)

Legend sedan	$2,500
Legend coupe	$3,000

ALFA ROMEO (expires Dec. 31)

164, 164L automatic (1991) Up to $200 per car monthly in floorplan aid

GENERAL MOTORS

Chevrolet (expires Feb. 4) Caprice (1992)	$250-800, quota
Camaro (1992)	$300-750, quota
Corvette ZR-1 (1992)	$2,000
Other Corvette (1992)	$1,000
Corvette ZR-1 (1991)	$3,000
Other Corvette (1991)	$2,000
Cadillac Allante (1991) (no expiration date)	$7,500 on first sale, $8,500 on additional sales
Pontiac Sunbird	$300

CHRYSLER CORP. (expires Dec. 31)

Eagle Talon (base, 1991-92)	$750
Jeep Cherokee Laredo (1991-92)	$1,000

HONDA

Civic 4-dr. sedan	$400

HYUNDAI (California only, 1991 models, expires Nov. 30)

Excel	$300
Sonata	$400
Scoupe	$500

Payment is for models purchased from Hyundai Motor America.

ISUZU (1991-92 models, unless otherwise noted; expires Dec. 31)

Cars*	$800-1,800
All pickups*	$1,000-1,500
4x4 pickups (bonus, 1990-91)	$500
Trooper*	$1,500-1,800
Rodeo*	$00-500

*Based on number sold

LOTUS (1991, no expiration date)

Elan	$5,000
Esprit Turbo	$11,000-15,000

MAZDA (1991 models; expires Nov. 4)

929	$2,000
323 (low-volume dealers)	Up to $500

MITSUBISHI (1990-91 models; rebates and terms vary by regions; programs expire Oct. 31)

Mirage	$250-1,500
Eclipse	$300-1,200
Galant	$300-2,100
Montero	$400-3,000
Pickups	$400-2,300

NISSAN (all expire Nov. 4, unless otherwise noted)

All 1991 and 1992 models	$200 after reaching quota

1991 models

Sentra	$200
240SX	$600
Maxima	$800
Stanza	$1,800
300ZX (expires Feb. 2)	$2,500-3,500, quota
Pickups	$1,200
Pathfinder	$1,400

1992 models

Stanza	$1,000
Pickups	$900
Pathfinder	$600

PEUGEOT (no expiration date)

405	$5,000
505	$6,000

SUBARU (1991 models; expires Nov. 4)

Legacy	$100-1,600, based on number sold

SUZUKI (expires Dec. 3)

Swift (1991)	$700-1,000
Swift (1992)	$400-700
Sidekick (1991)	$500-1,000
Sidekick (1992)	$300-700

STERLING (no expiration date)

All models $8,000*

*Or $3,000 if customer chooses 0 percent financing

TOYOTA (expires Nov. 4)

Corolla (1990-92)	$200-900, quota
Camry (1990-91)	$200-900, quota
Pickups	$200-1,300, quota

VOLKSWAGEN (No expiration date)

Passat (1991)	$1,500
Jetta, Fox, Golf (1991)	$500
All 1990 cars	$500-1,500

VOLVO (1991 models; expires Oct. 31)

740 series	$750-1,500
940 series	$1,500-2,500
780 coupe	$2,500

NADA
Seeks compromise on program cars

continued from PAGE 1

are remarketed to dealers, some still sell at auction with only 3,000 to 6,000 miles on them.

"This depreciates the value of new cars in the eyes of customers," said Anderson.

NADA wants program cars marketed equitably through franchised dealers, so a dealer can't corner a market, or flood a market with program cars, which plays havoc with prices.

The association is opposed to methods of marketing the vehicles outside of the auction network. Ford operates telemarketing programs selling repurchased vehicles directly to dealers in remote areas who can't attend auctions.

GM and Chrysler are testing pilot projects in Florida that involve skirting auctions by selling vehicles directly to dealers.

NADA has officially named repurchase vehicles "program cars" and defined short-term as meaning six months of operation and low mileage as 12,000 miles.

Directors apparently added a statement opposing fleet subsidies to the task force report, and included program cars as subsidized vehicles. But even though NADA opposes fleet subsidies, it "recognizes that program cars are a short-term remedy to a long-term problem."

Most dealers who sell program cars readily admit those sales are keeping their dealerships afloat in this downturn. For manufacturers, program cars are helping to keep factories operating and market share secure.

Program cars have grown to about 1.5 million vehicles this year. GM alone has remarketed 500,000 program vehicles to dealers through September. Chrysler sold 200,000 units and Ford has sold an estimated 300,000 vehicles so far this year.

Nissan North America Inc., which had decided to phase out program cars by year end, announced in September that it has re-entered the market after dealers protested.

More importantly, a survey by the NADA Dealer Candidate Academy reports that 78 percent of dealers believe that program cars substituted for new-car sales, but the same percentage say program cars are helpful to dealers.

Hence, program cars are a problem for NADA because dealers have always opposed fleet subsidies and program cars fall into this category.

Dealers are adamant that they should be able to buy vehicles for less than anyone else — even fleet buyers.

"For 25 years now the automakers have been offering special low prices to business fleets and rental companies," said a spokesman from the Ford Dealer Alliance. "As a result the consumer pays more so that the favored fleets can pay less."

Ford Dealer Alliance is a manufacturer watchdog organization comprising 1,500 Ford and Lincoln-Mercury dealers based in Hackensack, N.J.

Manufacturers offer several kinds of fleet subsidies, including lower prices on fleet purchases, according to the Ford Dealer Alliance.

The task force recommendations adopted by NADA directors will be turned over to the association's industry relations committee and brought before manufacturers.

SCHEDULED PLANT CLOSINGS

Plant	Weeks down	Units lost/ week
CHRYSLER		
Bramalea, Ontario	10/28	
Dodge Monaco		380
Eagle Premier		1,005
Pillette Road (Windsor, Ontario)	10/28	
Dodge Ram Van		400
Dodge Ram Wagon		1,300
FORD		
Lorain, Ohio	10/28, 11/4	4,300
Ford Thunderbird		
Mercury Cougar		
Oakville, Ontario	10/28, 11/4	4,800
Ford Tempo		
Mercury Topaz		
Wayne, Mich.	10/28, 11/4	
Ford Escort		5,800
Total U.S. car		10,100
Total Canada car		6,185
Total Canada truck		1,700
Total units lost week of 10/28		17,985

Source: Automotive News Data Center

Transmission defect baffles Ford; 788,796 trucks have it

Ford Motor Co. and Mazda Motor of America Inc. are notifying owners of 788,796 Ford-built compact trucks of a safety defect in the parking gear of the vehicles' automatic transmission that could let the trucks roll.

Ford has not determined the exact problem with the parking gear yet, according to spokeswoman Kathryn Black.

So it is not yet recalling the vehicles, but simply notifying owners of the problem and advising them to set their parking brake and remove the ignition key when stopping their vehicles.

Ford hopes to come up with a permanent fix and send out recall notices before the end of the year, Black said.

The vehicles affected include 1991 Ford Aerostar minivans and Explorer sport-utilities, including the two-door version that is also sold by Mazda under the Navajo name. Also included are 1990 Ford Aerostars and Ranger pickups equipped with A4LD automatic overdrive transmission.

Black said about 40 accidents have resulted from the defect, including four that caused minor injuries.

The Explorer has been one of Ford's most successful vehicles and was the ninth best-selling nameplate in the United States during the 1991 model year.

The two companies are jointly developing a new line of compact pickups which will be sold starting in 1993 model year. AN

GM may acquire Fiat car plant

FRANKFURT – General Motors is considering buying a vehicle assembly plant in Milan, Italy, that Fiat plans to close.

Fiat says it will shut the 2,500-employee plant and transfer production of its Panda and Y-10 cars to other facilities.

Fiat said it has been discussing sale of the plant to GM's Automotive Components Group Europe, based in Paris. GM declined comment but said that it frequently talks to Fiat, which buys parts from the GM components group. AN

U.S. AND CANADA CAR AND TRUCK PRODUCTION

Vehicles are domestic unless noted. Vehicles are cars unless noted.

	Est. 10/21-10/26/91	Actual 10/14-10/19/91	10/1-10/26/91	Year 1/1-10/26/91	Year 1/1-10/27/90
LeBaron A	0	0	0	0	8,071
LeBaron J	500	378	1,343	20,303	43,740
New Yorker	1,050	1,008	3,397	8,259	32,378
Fifth Avenue	1,450	1,506	5,515	26,381	29,784
Imperial	250	306	1,096	7,240	15,964
Town & Country (trk.)	150	122	468	3,653	2,078
Total Chrysler	**3,400**	**3,320**	**11,819**	**85,837**	**132,015**
Horizon	0	0	0	0	4,327
Sundance	1,750	1,783	6,852	51,793	74,301
Acclaim	1,600	1,886	6,841	66,107	96,639
Voyager (trk.)	1,900	2,818	9,255	50,673	70,106
Voyager (Can. trk.)	2,035	2,096	8,429	30,746	82,615
Total Plymouth	**7,285**	**8,585**	**31,381**	**289,321**	**327,988**
Omni	0	0	0	0	4,078
Daytona	700	599	2,095	7,160	29,145
Shadow	1,900	1,996	7,486	57,416	82,055
Dynasty	2,200	2,201	8,396	98,435	99,165
Spirit	2,150	2,511	9,108	63,463	96,547
Monaco (Can.)	0	236	236	8,477	8,556
Caravan (trk.)	1,900	2,930	9,527	94,184	75,418
Caravan (Can. trk.)	3,080	3,127	12,775	120,165	102,441
Caravan C/V (trk.)	100	124	419	3,004	4,171
Caravan C/V (Can. trk.)	85	80	336	12,995	5,793
Dakota (trk.)	3,600	3,352	13,249	79,651	61,237
Ram pickups (trk.)	1,200	1,108	4,398	62,275	88,952
Ram Wagon (Can. trk.)	0	328	1,156	16,227	20,467
Ram Van (Can. trk.)	0	1,148	3,837	35,188	49,082
Total Dodge	**16,915**	**19,740**	**73,019**	**658,642**	**717,107**
Premier (Can.)	0	486	486	8,911	10,123
Cherokee (trk.)	4,290	4,302	16,395	124,645	129,409
Comanche (trk.)	100	127	433	4,400	7,545
Grand Wagoneer (trk.)	0	0	0	1,539	5,594
Wagoneer (trk.)	30	37	145	2,327	3,265
Wrangler (Can trk.)	1,590	1,286	5,467	51,867	48,849
Total Jeep-Eagle	**6,010**	**6,238**	**22,926**	**193,689**	**204,785**
Total U.S. car	**13,588**	**14,174**	**52,128**	**486,558**	**606,194**
Total Can. car	**0**	**722**	**722**	**17,388**	**18,679**
Total U.S. truck	**16,276**	**14,928**	**54,293**	**456,351**	**447,775**
Total Can. truck	**6,790**	**8,067**	**32,001**	**327,192**	**389,247**
CHRYSLER CORP.	**36,616**	**37,883**	**139,145**	**1,287,489**	**1,361,895**
Escort	5,767	5,841	16,302	168,489	208,208
Mustang	2,453	2,229	6,118	73,732	113,551
Tempo	2,986	2,977	8,389	93,063	108,536
Tempo (Can.)	3,713	2,411	8,932	90,806	95,478
Taurus	7,241	7,230	27,710	268,413	286,619
Thunderbird	3,025	2,909	5,934	64,268	97,983
Crown Victoria (Can.)	0	1,751	5,600	76,356	100,161
Aerostar (trk.)	4,080	3,956	15,042	145,332	177,069
Bronco (trk.)	649	698	2,624	16,172	42,529
Explorer/Bronco II (trk.)	6,580	7,407	25,552	231,706	167,617
Navajo (trk.)	194	279	854	9,885	5,845
Econoline (trk.)	4,573	4,067	15,137	117,268	149,510
Heavies (trk.)	0	1,031	1,845	26,597	42,419
Light trucks (trk.)	11,151	10,544	38,348	271,051	385,306
Light trucks (Can. trk.)	3,040	2,364	7,790	78,821	114,645
Ranger (trk.)	7,227	7,490	24,524	229,587	239,032
Total Ford Div.	**62,611**	**63,184**	**210,099**	**1,961,547**	**2,334,508**
Topaz	1,368	1,247	3,500	38,552	40,928
Topaz (Can.)	981	1,021	3,111	29,916	35,398
Cougar	1,295	1,411	2,706	47,528	65,146
Sable	3,239	3,202	11,992	87,836	88,786
Grand Marquis (Can.)	0	2,139	7,365	85,625	93,744
Total Mercury	**6,883**	**9,020**	**28,674**	**288,457**	**324,002**
Continental	1,182	1,192	4,518	45,930	49,913
Mark VII	208	204	781	8,050	16,517
Town Car	2,775	2,796	10,609	108,010	125,310
Total Lincoln	**4,165**	**4,192**	**15,908**	**161,990**	**191,740**
Total L-M Div.	**11,048**	**13,212**	**44,582**	**451,447**	**515,742**
Total U.S. car	**31,541**	**31,238**	**99,558**	**1,003,872**	**1,281,497**
Total Can. car	**4,694**	**7,322**	**25,008**	**282,765**	**324,781**
Total U.S. truck	**34,384**	**35,472**	**123,925**	**1,047,599**	**1,298,327**
Total Can. truck	**3,040**	**2,364**	**7,790**	**78,821**	**114,645**
FORD MOTOR CO.	**73,659**	**76,396**	**255,281**	**2,412,994**	**2,858,250**
Skylark	2,200	1,493	6,442	45,123	78,250
Century	2,771	2,768	9,755	80,770	57,680
Regal (Can.)	2,800	2,846	11,133	104,493	82,444
Riviera	359	304	1,130	7,545	18,858
Park Avenue/Electra	1,766	1,796	6,882	79,188	50,857
LeSabre	4,519	3,774	15,130	81,589	136,214
Roadmaster Sedan*	1,287	1,393	4,774	34,820	0
Roadmaster Wagon††	320	314	1,176	12,568	4,022
Reatta	0	0	0	1,210	5,277
Total Buick	**16,022**	**14,578**	**58,422**	**447,485**	**433,602**
Eldorado	740	618	2,356	10,462	17,993
Seville	804	693	2,569	20,543	29,112
Brougham	552	550	2,078	17,502	25,631
DeVille	3,718	3,731	14,108	129,082	138,089
Allante	63	64	241	2,469	3,203
Total Cadillac	**5,877**	**5,656**	**21,353**	**180,057**	**214,028**
Cavalier	6,211	5,841	22,295	208,297	291,433
Camaro	1,399	1,350	5,220	44,779	64,802
Celebrity (Can.)	0	0	0	0	20,319
Corsica-Beretta	5,856	4,863	19,617	196,662	240,320
Lumina (Can.)	5,500	5,590	21,736	196,403	183,561
Caprice	2,441	2,383	9,048	108,540	181,868
Corvette	480	480	1,824	17,196	19,982
Astro (trk.)	3,464	2,614	10,565	83,320	109,465
Blazer (trk.)	160	133	375	5,967	14,291
Lumina APV (trk.)	1,617	1,476	6,629	39,768	72,921
Medlums (trk.)	220	274	494	1,930	7,800
P-Model (trk.)	485	0	485	16,092	17,936
Pickups (trk.)	7,025	6,839	24,967	242,625	354,992
Pickups (Can. trk.)	3,100	3,115	12,525	117,174	140,910
S10 (trk.)	6,762	7,466	25,555	216,599	201,909
S10 Blazer (trk.)	3,222	2,764	9,416	37,792	68,267
Sportsvan (trk.)	1,125	1,124	4,707	35,680	51,649
Sportsvan (Can. trk.)	1,250	1,294	5,345	43,922	42,666
Suburban (trk.)	100	25	190	21,311	57,833
Total Chevrolet	**50,417**	**47,632**	**180,990**	**1,634,076**	**2,142,924**
Calais	0	0	0	34,616	87,398
Cutlass Ciera	3,801	3,801	13,367	83,576	59,681
Cutlass Ciera (Can.)	0	0	0	41,161	64,840
Cutlass Supreme	2,700	3,801	11,186	88,239	79,513
Toronado	212	179	662	4,304	13,125
88	3,080	2,724	10,718	72,016	88,229
Custom Cruiser Wag.††	160	160	585	7,093	1,223
98	1,482	1,469	5,605	64,028	38,551
Silhouette (trk.)	444	645	2,048	17,108	27,180
Bravada (trk.)	252	223	852	12,201	0
Total Oldsmobile	**12,131**	**13,002**	**45,023**	**424,342**	**459,748**
Sunbird	2,842	2,661	10,235	97,177	136,833
Grand Am	5,460	3,645	16,338	107,690	183,466
Firebird	601	699	2,345	17,249	37,765
Grand Prix	3,364	3,363	12,736	90,225	103,524
Pontiac 6000	0	0	0	19,603	47,036
Bonneville	2,985	2,956	11,641	64,704	66,154
Trans Sport (trk.)	936	918	4,035	24,874	39,874
Total Pontiac	**16,188**	**14,242**	**57,330**	**421,522**	**614,652**
Jimmy (trk.)	78	73	177	1,772	4,375
Mediums (trk.)	380	274	654	3,691	7,466
P-Model (trk.)	50	0	50	1,989	2,375
Pickups (trk.)	2,572	2,452	8,055	99,153	125,053
Pickups (Can. trk.)	1,000	1,118	4,084	43,276	52,674
Sonoma (trk.)	1,310	1,378	4,746	49,662	44,307
S15 Jimmy (trk.)	1,032	816	3,183	13,408	22,988
Safari (trk.)	1,144	988	3,638	33,392	38,199
Suburban (trk.)	60	8	90	17,108	27,931
Vandura (trk.)	490	462	1,883	15,670	19,331
Vandura (Can. trk.)	500	533	1,796	18,359	16,915
Total GMC	**8,616**	**8,102**	**28,356**	**297,580**	**361,614**
Total Saturn*	**3,600**	**3,050**	**13,070**	**77,730**	**2,175**
Total U.S. car	**65,023**	**61,413**	**233,933**	**1,926,095**	**2,308,294**
Total Can. car	**8,300**	**8,436**	**32,868**	**342,056**	**351,164**
Total U.S. truck	**32,928**	**30,953**	**112,792**	**991,158**	**1,316,142**
Total Can. truck	**5,850**	**6,000**	**23,750**	**222,731**	**253,185**
GENERAL MOTORS	**112,901**	**106,802**	**403,344**	**3,482,632**	**4,228,735**
Can. car	2,200	1,968	8,542	90,384	12,660
Can. trk.	1,600	1,275	5,693	43,080	8,703
CAMI*	**3,800**	**3,243**	**14,235**	**133,464**	**21,363**
DIAMOND-STAR*	**3,795**	**3,453**	**12,830**	**125,524**	**126,108**
Civic	1,845	1,592	4,625	67,373	89,140
Civic (Can.)	2,190	1,758	7,663	88,021	86,244
Accord	7,920	7,848	30,798	302,806	275,352
Total U.S. car	**9,765**	**9,448**	**35,423**	**378,179**	**364,492**
Total Can. car	**2,190**	**1,758**	**7,663**	**88,021**	**86,244**
HONDA	**11,955**	**11,206**	**43,086**	**458,200**	**450,736**
HYUNDAI Sonata (Can.)	**588**	**558**	**2,286**	**21,352**	**19,988**
MAZDA*	**4,831**	**4,115**	**15,340**	**134,178**	**140,803**
U.S. trk.	1,500	1,695	4,439	54,160	60,953
Can. trk.	115	132	379	5,700	7,417
NAVISTAR*	**1,615**	**1,827**	**4,818**	**59,860**	**68,370**
Sentra	2,836	2,819	11,201	106,724	75,170
Pickup (trk.)	2,732	2,722	10,923	109,420	117,454
NISSAN	**5,568**	**5,541**	**22,123**	**216,144**	**192,624**
Geo Prizm	1,850	1,864	7,018	74,625	83,784
Toyota Corolla	2,400	2,395	9,073	85,280	84,880
Toyota Hilux (trk.)	150	164	521	746	0
HUMMI	**4,400**	**4,423**	**16,612**	**160,652**	**168,664**
Legacy	1,280	1,314	4,880	47,180	25,280
Pickup (trk.)	594	585	2,214	21,883	0
Rodeo (trk.)	951	587	3,013	24,156	0
Total U.S. car	**1,280**	**1,314**	**4,880**	**47,180**	**25,280**
Total U.S. trk.	**1,545**	**1,172**	**5,227**	**46,039**	**27,900**
SUBARU-ISUZU	**2,825**	**2,486**	**10,108**	**93,219**	**53,276**
Camry	4,020	5,064	14,123	151,747	182,934
Corolla (Can.)	1,390	1,188	5,100	54,370	49,863
TOYOTA	**5,328**	**6,272**	**19,223**	**206,117**	**232,797**
VOLVO 740, 940 (Can.)	**150**	**129**	**524**	**6,433**	**6,610**
AM GENERAL (trk.)	**400**	**400**	**1,520**	**17,090**	**18,540**
MISCELLANEOUS (trk.)**	**2,600**	**2,000**	**9,000**	**112,520**	**123,000**
Total U.S. car	**140,891**	**137,309**	**494,516**	**4,434,562**	**5,208,406**
Total Canada car	**19,424**	**22,082**	**82,693**	**982,787**	**960,910**
Total U.S.-Canada Car	**160,315**	**159,391**	**577,210**	**5,337,260**	**6,070,316**
Total U.S. truck	**89,590**	**90,000**	**323,520**	**2,835,075**	**3,321,787**
Total Canada truck	**17,385**	**17,898**	**69,613**	**677,524**	**693,177**
Total U.S.-Canada truck	**106,904**	**107,896**	**393,134**	**3,512,600**	**4,014,964**
TOTAL U.S.	**230,480**	**227,407**	**818,037**	**7,298,637**	**8,530,193**
TOTAL CANADA	**36,810**	**39,980**	**152,307**	**1,580,232**	**1,563,087**
TOTAL U.S.-CANADA CAR & TRUCK	**267,219**	**267,357**	**970,343**	**8,849,868**	**10,093,280**

e-Estimate ††1990 totals reflect Le...ère (rwd) ††1990 totals reflect Olds. 88 (rwd)

*CAMI includes Geo Metro and Suzuki Sidekick trucks; Diamond-Star includes Eagle Summit and Talon, Mitsubishi Eclipse and Mirage and Plymouth Laser; Mazda includes MX-6, 626 and Ford Probe.

**Estimates for Mack, Volvo-White, Kenworth, Peterbilt, Freightliner, Mercedes-Benz.

May contain error of one or two units due to rounding.

Chrysler, Ford idle 5 plants

ROBIN-LYN RAIMEY
Special Correspondent

Ford Motor Co. has idled three truck assembly plants this week, and Chrysler Corp. has extended downtime at a car plant and a truck plant. Three of the plants are in Canada.

Scheduled to go down today for two weeks are Ford's Wayne, Mich.; Lorain, Ohio, and Oakville, Ontario, truck plants.

Chrysler's Bramalea, Ontario, car plant and its Pillette Road full-sized van plant in Windsor, Ontario, will remain down this week.

Last week's U.S. truck production of 89,509 was down 0.7 percent from the previous week, but up 11.5 percent over the year-ago tally.

U.S. car production last week was 140,891, up 2.6 percent from the previous week, but 4.0 percent below last year's total.

In Canada, car production last week of 19,424 units was down 12.0 percent from the prior week and down 27.8 percent from last year.

Canadian truck production was 17,395, down 2.8 percent from the previous week and down 10.6 percent from last year.

General Motors accounted for 46.6 percent of last week's car production in the United States, followed by Ford Motor Co., 22.4 percent; Chrysler Corp., 9.6 percent; Honda of America Manufacturing Inc., 6.9 percent; New United Motor Manufacturing Inc., 3.0 percent.

Other shares were Mazda Motor Manufacturing (USA) Corp., 2.9 percent; Toyota Motor Manufacturing (U.S.A.) Inc., 2.9 percent; Diamond-Star Motors Corp., 2.7 percent; Nissan Motor Manufacturing Corp. U.S.A., 2.0 percent; and Subaru-Isuzu Automotive Inc., 1.0 percent.

GM's Buick-Oldsmobile-Cadillac Group scheduled two shifts of Saturday overtime at the car plant in Wilmington, Del.; the Buick City car plant in Flint, Mich., and the car and truck plants in Lordstown, Ohio.

The Chevrolet-Pontiac-Cadillac Group scheduled a Saturday overtime shift at the Oklahoma City car plant, and the GM Truck and Bus Group scheduled two Saturday shifts at plants in Baltimore and Moraine, Ohio, and at the Fontiac (Mich.) West van plant.

GM of Canada scheduled Saturday overtime at the truck plants in Oshawa and Scarborough, Ontario.

Ford scheduled daily overtime at the Lorain, Ohio, and Louisville, Ky., truck plants.

Ford's truck plant in Kansas City, Mo., worked daily overtime and was scheduled for two Saturday shifts.

Chrysler scheduled daily overtime at its truck plant in Warren, Mich., and a Saturday shift at the St. Louis No. 2 minivan plant. AN